



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Seventeen-Year old man Is Sentenced to Three Years for Sexual Assault on Stranger

WASHINGTON – A seventeen-year old man, Joshua Wafer, of 4021 19th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to thirty-six (36) months of imprisonment, with all but six of those months suspended, by the Honorable Herbert Dixon in the Superior Court for the District of Columbia, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. The sentence was imposed in connection with Wafer's earlier plea to one count of Third Degree Sexual Abuse for his unprovoked attack on a total stranger on January 20, 2010. A thirty-six month sentence is at the top of the D.C. Superior Court voluntary sentencing guidelines for this offense. Wafer was also ordered to a ten year period of probation under the Youth Rehabilitation Act, and will have to register as a convicted sex offense for ten years, as well.

According to the evidence introduced at the plea hearing, the victim – a young graduate student who had just moved to the District a week before the attack – was coming home from school at around 7:00 p.m. on January 20, 2010. As she walked on the path next to her building, the defendant snuck up behind her and grabbed her around the neck. As the complainant struggled to get away from the defendant, the two of them fell to the ground on the wooden walkway. She was able to get away from the defendant and run a few feet further up the walkway before the defendant grabbed her foot, again knocking her to the ground on the walkway. Again, the complainant struggled, successfully, to get away from the defendant. She then ran up to the front door of her apartment building, got it unlocked and tried to run through the doorway and into her building when the defendant jumped on her back, tackling her to the floor of the foyer of her apartment building.

Inside the foyer, the defendant got on top of the victim, covered her mouth with one of his hands and fondled her with the other, telling her what he wanted to do to her. The victim continued struggling, unsuccessfully this time, to get away.

Because of the commotion caused by the defendant's attack, the occupants of three different apartments in that building eventually came out into the foyer. They all saw the defendant on the complainant's back as the complainant laid face down in the foyer, and saw that he was covering her mouth, trying to prevent her from calling for help.

One of the neighbors who witnessed the attack told her teenaged son to get the defendant. The son gave chase and was joined in his efforts by an adult man. They caught the defendant while he was still in the 300 block of Taylor Street, N.E., and brought him back to the foyer of the apartment building where the attack had taken place. They, and the other neighbors, detained the defendant until the police arrived and arrested him.

In announcing today's sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the intervention of the victim's heroic neighbors, who intervened and prevented an even more serious crime from occurring. U.S. Attorney Machen also commended the work of MPD Detective Lenard Jenkins and Fourth District Officer Dane Riley. He also praised the work of paralegal Joyce Arthur, legal assistant Tanisha "Nikki" Nelson and victim advocate Melissa Milam. Finally, he commended Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter V. Taylor, who investigated and prosecuted the case.